

# Artists in the Archive: An Exploratory Study of the Artist-in-Residence Program at the City of Portland Archives & Records Center\*



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**RÉSUMÉ** En faisant le point sur des parties constituanes d'une étude exploratoire (2013-2014) sur le programme inaugural d'artiste en résidence au City of Portland Archives & Records Center, en Oregon, ce texte présente un aperçu des expériences et des actions des archivistes, des artistes et de l'administrateur des arts publics qui ont participé au programme. Ce texte porte une attention particulière aux façons dont les artistes conceptualisent les documents d'archives, comment ils s'en servent, comment ils y réagissent. Il se penche aussi sur les raisons pour lesquelles les documents d'archives circulent comme œuvres d'art et poésie, et les lieux où ils circulent, ainsi que les liens qui sont forgés entre l'utilisation et la réutilisation des documents d'archives. Cette étude suggère que l'examen des documents d'archives dont se sont servis les artistes en résidence, du point de vue de leur forme, de leur utilisation et de leur trajet à travers le temps et l'espace, constitue une façon enrichissante de penser aux transactions, aux expériences et aux relations humaines qui peuvent se produire entre les documents d'archives, l'art, la poésie et les archives.

**ABSTRACT** Reporting on components of an exploratory study (2013–14) of the inaugural artist-in-residence program at the City of Portland Archives & Records Center in Oregon, this article provides a view of the experiences and actions of the archivists, the artists, and the public arts manager participating in the residency. It pays particular attention to how the artists conceptualize, use, and respond to archival records, how and where the records circulate as works of art and poetry, and how connections are formed around the use and reuse of records. The study suggests that examining the records used in such a residency from the standpoints of their forms, uses, and paths through space and time is a productive way to reflect on the human transactions, experiences, and relationships that can occur between records, art, poetry, and the archive.

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## Prologue I: Police Surveillance in Portland, Oregon

“She was always hunched over the machine, fingers flying over the fabric trying to find new ways to cut the time it took to finish a bundle of shirts or blouses,” writes Cathy Scheirman in “Piecework,” an article about her mother’s job as a seamstress in a sewing factory, published in 1979 by the Women’s Night Watch in the tabloid *Lavinia Press*.<sup>1</sup> This newspaper was one of the many items collected by the Portland Police Bureau as part of its surveillance of 576 activist groups and individuals between 1965 and 1985. During these two decades, the bureau amassed thousands of photographs, notes, intelligence reports, news clippings, and materials generated by activists from groups and organizations such as the Black Panthers, the United Farm Workers, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, the Rape Relief Hotline, Greenpeace, and the Chicano Student Movement.<sup>2</sup> In 1981, Oregon law made it illegal for police to gather or keep information on any individual or group not tied to a criminal investigation, and the documents were slated for destruction. However, Portland police terrorism expert Winfield Falk, a lead detective who had conducted the surveillance activities, stole the thirty-six boxes of surveillance documents and continued to add to them for four years. Falk died in 1987, and the documents ended up in a barn.<sup>3</sup> In 2002, someone anonymously donated the boxes to the Portland *Tribune* newspaper, which subsequently ran a series of articles about the documents, naming them the Watcher Files.<sup>4</sup>

The *Tribune* published its first article about the police surveillance files on 13 September 2002. It caught the attention of the city archivist, Diana Banning, at the Portland Archives & Records Center (PARC).<sup>5</sup> Banning was

- 1 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, “Lavinia Press Published This Recollection of a Mother in a Sweatshop,” *The Watcher Files Project*, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://looseleafservices.us/womens-night-watch-published-lavinia-press/>.
- 2 Ben Jacklet, “Watcher Files Find New Home,” *Portland Tribune*, 12 January 2004, <http://www.pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/107945-watcher-files-find-new-home>; Garrick Imatani, “Viewing Archives through an Artist’s Lens: The City of Portland’s Artist-in-Residence Program” (lecture, Northwest Archivists Conference, Spokane, WA, 30 May 2014).
- 3 Ben Jacklet, “The Secret Watchers,” *Portland Tribune*, 12 September 2002, <http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/117580-the-secret-watchers>.
- 4 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, “About the Watcher Files Project,” *The Watcher Files Project*, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://looseleafservices.us/about/>.
- 5 As City Archivist Diana Banning explains, “PARC is the official repository for City of Portland records, including the city’s historical collection, and contains more than 40,000 cubic feet of records. These records represent the activities of city bureaus and elected officials, and document the social and infrastructure history of Portland. The collections include reports, studies, correspondence, project records, policies, and other documentation of how the city operates. Also contained in the collections are more than 10,000 maps and plans, and a vast collection of photographs documenting city personnel and projects. Significant research subjects documented by the collection include, but are not limited to, urban planning, parks, land use, public works, economic development, public safety, neighborhoods,

interested in moving the files into the city's archive and immediately contacted the Oregon State Archives for a consultation. The Oregon State Archives recommended that PARC acquire and destroy the records according to the state's record retention policy. Banning disagreed, believing that the files should be acquired and preserved instead. She took the issue to the city auditor (to whom PARC reports), who agreed with Banning that the records should be acquired and preserved. After meeting with the city attorney, PARC decided to move forward with the acquisition, and Banning worked with the managing editor of the *Tribune* to transfer them as of 19 March 2004.<sup>6</sup> The archivists applied preservation treatments to the files, such as airing out mouldy documents and clearing off dirt and mice droppings. They had success in saving and preserving a large portion of the records, but some were unsalvageable, including bundles of photographs that had emulsified into bricks.<sup>7</sup> Today, the Police Historical/Archival Investigative Files (a.k.a. the Watcher Files), a permanent collection at PARC, contains documentation on 301 organizations and groups who were under surveillance by the Portland police.

## Prologue II: From Archival Records to Poetry

"A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it ... by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader."<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1:** A hand-stamped copper plate from Kaia Sand's poetry object, "She Had Her Own Reason for Participating."



*She was always hunched over the machine.  
She was always hunched over the machine.*  
This was one of the first lines I read that prompted me to begin to collect sentences that began with "she." So I sledgehammered these words into a copper card, hunched over, on a patch of basement concrete. I added this line to hundreds of lines beginning with the word "she," a poem accreting into a crowd of women. The poem is titled "She Had Her Own Reason for Participating."<sup>9</sup>

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and social issues. PARC functions as a part of the elected City Auditor's office and assists in ensuring an open and accountable government." Diana Banning, email message to author, 28 April 2014.

6 Diana Banning, email message to author, 14 August 2014.

7 Imatani and Sand, "About the Watcher Files Project."

8 Charles Olson, *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966), 16.

9 Imatani and Sand, "Lavinia Press Published This Recollection of a Mother in a Sweatshop."

## Introduction: The Artist-in-Residence Program at the City of Portland Archives & Records Center

In March 2013, visual artist Garrick Imatani and poet Kaia Sand were selected for the inaugural City of Portland Archives & Record Center's artist-in-residence program, through an award of a public art project by Portland's Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC). Imatani and Sand, who share a connection in their approaches to documentary research-based work, their interest in politics and history, and their long histories of working in archives as part of their creative processes, applied for the residency as collaborators. This is their first project together.

The artist residency is the first in a series for PARC, with the goal of enabling artists to create work in any media that engages and/or is a result of working with the archive's collections and archivists.<sup>10</sup> The residency, public programming, and the works the artists make are funded by the City of Portland Percent-for-Art requirement from the building of PARC within the Portland State University Academic & Student Recreation Center in 2010.<sup>11</sup> The Portland Percent-for-Art ordinance requires that two percent of most publicly funded capital construction projects be set aside for the creation and maintenance of public art.<sup>12</sup> RACC manages Portland's Percent-for-Art programs, one of which is the "Public Art Residencies *intersections*," an artist-in-residence program "designed to explore the 'art of work' and the 'work of art,'" which encourages artists to investigate new methods of working and to create socially engaged interactive art in community settings.<sup>13</sup>

### A Study and Its Methodology

Since January 2013, I have been engaged in an exploratory study of PARC's artist-in-residence program using ethnographic methods: participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and documentary analysis of all materials generated from or about the residency. My attraction to this particular residency comes from my research interests in understanding (1) the experience of

10 Regional Arts & Culture Council, Public Art, "Artists Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand Selected for the Inaugural City of Portland Archives & Record Center Artist in Residence Program," *Regional Arts & Culture Council*, 17 March 2013, <http://racc.org/public-art/artists-garrick-imatani-and-kaia-sand-selected-inaugural-city-portland-archives-record-ce>.

11 Imatani and Sand, "About the Watcher Files Project."

12 Regional Arts & Culture Council, Public Art Overview-Public Art Programs," *Regional Arts & Culture Council*, accessed 8 February 2015, <http://racc.org/public-art/overview-opportunities>.

13 Regional Arts & Culture Council, "Public Art-Temporary Public Art-intersections: public art residencies," *Regional Arts & Culture Council*, accessed 8 February 2015, <http://racc.org/public-art/temporary-public-art>.

artists in the archive; (2) the experience of archivists who work with artists in the archive; (3) how artists use, respond to, contextualize, and transform archival records; and, (4) how archival records as works of art move and circulate through time and space and, through this circulation, what kinds of social relations occur and what histories accumulate between records, individuals, communities, and the archive.

I am adopting anthropologist George Marcus's method of "multi-sited ethnography," which is research designed "around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations."<sup>14</sup> In this method, the researcher follows the people or things (or metaphors, plots/stories, conflicts) of study as they circulate through different contexts and space and time. Marcus's "mobile ethnography"<sup>15</sup> provides a conducive and productive way to study the movement of archival records – following the thing – as well as any linkages, associations, and/or disconnections between the individuals, objects, and events comprising PARC's artist-in-residence program. This is important since the residency takes place not only at PARC but also in a variety of other contexts and sites, including poetry festivals, an archives conference, museums, a reading series, the streets of downtown Portland, digital video objects, YouTube, Facebook, and a small number of websites.

During the study, I have been a participant-observer of (1) the artists and archivists at work in the archive; (2) a presentation given by the archivists and a presentation/performance given by the artists at the Northwest Archivists Conference in Spokane, Washington; and (3) an exhibition/performance given by the artists at the Multnomah Public Library in Portland. As well, I have conducted individual and group in-depth interviews with the archivists, the artists, and the public art manager involved in the residency. Furthermore, I am engaged in analyzing all of the materials generated from or about the residency, which includes items such as (1) publicity produced by PARC and RACC about the artist-in-residence program and the artists' work in it; (2) newspaper articles about the artists' work during the residency; (3) the artists' website and Facebook page; (4) an audio interview of the artists by broadcast journalist Dave Miller of Oregon Public Broadcasting; (5) the transcript of an interview with Sand by visual artist Daniela Molnar, which is published on Molnar's website, *Words in Place*; (6) video recordings of Sand performing in the Switch Reading Series at the Hazel Room in Portland and at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa; and, (7) photographic documentation of the artists' lectures and performances at the New Structure/Project City Scope in Portland, as well as the artists' exhibitions at PARC, and at the Blaffer Art Museum in Houston.

14 George E. Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (October 1995): 105.

15 *Ibid.*, 96.

I come to this study from several vantage points related to the environs of this artist-in-residence program. For over twenty-five years, I have been involved in the art world as a modern choreographer and dancer, as a performing arts librarian (the past ten years), and as an archivist (the past two years) at a university for the visual, performing, and literary arts. I am currently a doctoral student in information studies, with an emphasis on archival studies. Being a practising artist, archivist, and a student of archives gives me an insider perspective advantageous to this study, and has been especially helpful in developing rapport, trust, and camaraderie with the archivists and artists. However, I have become increasingly aware during this study of the need to be reflexively attentive to the beliefs and assumptions I hold and practise in both disciplines, in order to remain open to experiencing beliefs, ideas, and practices either divergent from my own or that have different meanings for the archivists and artists involved.

This is the first in a series of articles about PARC's artist-in-residence program. It traces two themes: (1) the origins of and motivations behind PARC's artist-in-residence program; and (2) the experiences and actions of the artists from the onset of the residency to its midway point. While tracing these themes, the article also contemplates:

- how individuals involved in the residency both conceive of and work within two constituent elements of this residency – the archive and public art;
- how the artists are conceptualizing, creating, exhibiting, and performing literary/art works with archival records;
- how several of the initial literary/art works to emerge from this residency move and circulate through time and space, and in doing so, what, if any, connections, associations, resonances, or relationships occur between individuals, archival records, literary/art works, and the archive.

In subsequent articles, I will explore two lines of inquiry emerging from the artists' work at the mid to late part of the residency. The first is the question of where anonymity is in a public document; Imatani explores anonymity in archival records through photography and graphite drawings housed in a sculptural plywood cabinet engraved with language from the records. The second emerges from "Passing It On," in which Imatani and Sand, working with several activists whose lives are detailed in the records, create an activist bookshelf project comprising sculptural bookshelves inscribed with language from the records and book selections curated by the activists. In addition, forthcoming work will shine a brighter light on the interactions and collaborations between the archivists and the artists during the residency, as well as the archivists' work in acquiring and managing the Police Historical/Archival Investigative Files (the Watcher Files) over time.

### Why an Artist-in-Residence Program at PARC?

In May 2013, I travelled to Portland to meet and spend time with the PARC archivists and the artists involved in the residency. Although I had been in email communication with Banning for several months, during which time she told me it was her idea to initiate the artist-in-residence program when the Percent-for-Art opportunity arose, I did not know her reasons for doing so. During one of our first interviews, she explained, “It comes from the desire to open up the archives to people other than the archive’s traditional users, to reach out to the community, and to view the archives through a different lens.”<sup>16</sup> Banning has also stated that she hopes the residency “will help to breakdown [*sic*] stereotypes of how people use the historical collections,” and that “seeing how artists interpret materials will bring a new perspective.”<sup>17</sup>

During a presentation given by the archivists and artists at the 2014 Northwest Archivists Conference in Spokane, Banning spoke in greater detail about some of her reasons for initiating the artist-in-residence program:

For a long time now our profession has been talking about ways to bring in other audiences. We all have our usual suspects coming in, the history people doing research ... genealogists, etc. But for us to remain relevant, to get support of the community, we need to continue to reach out to the communities. What I wanted to do was to try to reach out to a group in a totally different, new way ... this is not to say that we haven’t had artists come in and use the collections. But, for the most part, these artists were using the collections similar to our usual suspects [historians, genealogists]: they have a project and want to find a photo to go with it, or they want a map as a backdrop for a poem they’ve created – essentially they’re still mining the collection to support the work that they’re doing. What I wanted was something different.

Banning went on to describe the goal of the initiative:

For the residency, we wanted a collaboration between the artists and the archives and we didn’t care if it was through engaging with the collections or looking at the processes that we use as archivists. We are really open to how the artists want to engage; but, we don’t want them to just mine the collection, we want some type of back and forth. We want them to be ambassadors for the collections: we want that entrée into a world where we don’t necessarily have those connections.<sup>18</sup>

16 Diana Banning, in discussion with the author, 24 May 2013.

17 Regional Arts & Culture Council, “Artists Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand Selected for the Inaugural City of Portland Archives & Record Center Artist in Residence Program.”

18 Diana Banning, “Viewing Archives through an Artist’s Lens: The City of Portland’s Artist-in-Residence Program” (lecture, Northwest Archivists Conference, Spokane, WA, 30 May 2014).

The genesis of the artist-in-residency program is rooted in two of Banning's experiences at PARC: her interactions with an artist who worked in the archive and her involvement with the Oregon Archives Crawl.<sup>19</sup> At the conference, Banning explained how her experience with the artist shaped her ideas for bringing artists into the archive:

We had a work-study student who was an artist going to one of the local art colleges. It was fun having conversations with her because as she was working with the records and processing them, she saw the world of information in a totally different way. She created a series of broadsides that combined fact and fiction in this wonderful way – the weaving of history into the artistic – and when I saw this it was “click”; this is where I want to go.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Artists and Their Watcher Files Project**

Imatani and Sand have named their work in the residency the Watcher Files Project, reflecting their artistic engagement with the Portland Police Bureau's surveillance files. Early in the residency, after thumbing through a wide array of archival documents, photographs, and posters in PARC's collections, both artists were drawn to the surveillance files. The artists interviewed Banning and an assistant archivist, Brian Johnson, to capture the story surrounding the files, a story that subsequently drew them in to work with the files.

In archives, writes Rodney Carter, “traces of the silenced or silent will inevitably be present.... It is only in the awareness of silence that we can begin to remedy it. It must be acknowledged that a group is not present in the archives.”<sup>21</sup> A significant part of the artists' work in this residency is acknowledging and addressing silences in the archive, engaging in processes of talking back to and annotating archival records in order to reveal and fill in some of the silences and gaps within the records. During my visit at PARC, the artists shared that this particular strategy stems from their interest in

19 Initiated in 2010 by the Portland Area Archivists, and based on the idea of a pub crawl, the “Crawl” is a one-day event that takes place in four host archival institutions in Portland. At each host site, representatives from over thirty Oregon archives and heritage institutions staff tables and converse with “crawlers” about their collections. According to Banning, the idea behind the Crawl is to expand archival outreach efforts “beyond the usual suspects – people we already know are involved with the archive, such as historians and scholars” – with the hope to “bring it to the street, bring people in who would never have thought to come into an archives or who never thought the archives had some relevance to their lives or their community.” Diana Banning, in discussion with the author, 24 May 2013.

20 Banning, “Viewing Archives through an Artist's Lens.”

21 Rodney G.S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence,” *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 223.



how the archives act as the city's official record into perpetuity. Since the works we produce will become part of the city's permanent collection, our artistic and literary interventions will serve as an addendum to the original files. A way to talk back and infuse the official with the voice that was unrepresented. Our project highlights and annotates some of what is missing within the institutional record.<sup>22</sup>

In an interview with broadcast journalist Dave Miller on the Oregon Public Broadcasting's radio program "Think Out Loud," Imatani describes why he and Sand were drawn to a residency in an archive and why they are talking back to the archival records:

With archives you have this mountain of paperwork and this fairly bureaucratic system that you would think is pretty antithetical to the creative process, but I think we saw this as an opportunity to try to work through this system and think what might actually gain significance or power through this. For example, once something enters the city archives, nothing can be changed ... and you can't make any amendments to it. So, we thought, well, if we're going to do this public art project, and it's basically going to be re-acquired by the city and go back into that city circulation, what might we be able to put into our public art project that would begin to address some of those voices that were unrepresented in the official record?<sup>23</sup>

In the same interview, Sand explains that in archives one is confronted with documents that "don't have a context, so there's always an outside, things that are left out." For Sand, what has been left out of the Watcher Files – "the stories, the voices of the people who were surveilled," is "extra-compelling ... so that's what we're interested in, we're interested in a very active process of seeking out some of those voices."<sup>24</sup>

## Public Art

As already introduced, PARC's artist-in-residence program is a public art project, and is, as Imatani mentions in the above interview, an element, along with the archive, that is shaping and informing the artists' work. Public art has been called "a complex, multifaceted discipline," elusive, difficult to define,<sup>25</sup>

22 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

23 Garrick Imatani, interview by Dave Miller, "Artists Bring Archived Portland Police Surveillance Records to Light," on program "Think Out Loud," Oregon Public Broadcasting, 24 October 2013, <http://www.opb.org/radio/programs/thinkoutloud/segment/artists-bring-archived-surveillance-records-to-light/>.

24 Kaia Sand, interview by Dave Miller, "Artists Bring Archived Portland Police Surveillance Records to Light," on program "Think Out Loud," Oregon Public Broadcasting, 24 October 2013, <http://www.opb.org/radio/programs/thinkoutloud/segment/artists-bring-archived-surveillance-records-to-light/>.

25 Cameron Cartiere, "Coming in from the Cold: A Public Art History," in *The Practice of Public Art*, ed. Cameron Cartiere and Shelly Willis (New York: Routledge, 2008), 8.

and lacking a “single, reductive definition.”<sup>26</sup> Artist Arlene Raven points out that “today, there is no consensus about what public art should look like,”<sup>27</sup> and indeed a plethora of art forms, such as installations, site-specific work, temporary works, permanent works, performance, social practice art, community projects, monuments, and sculpture have fallen under the aegis of public art.<sup>28</sup>

However, there are some basic agreements about what public art is and does: “it gathers the issues of its time and addresses a larger audience”<sup>29</sup> and it is socially focused.<sup>30</sup> It also, according to art critic Patricia Phillips, “appeals for serious, spirited response to the daunting complexity of contemporary issues; it requires agile readings of art and life,” and is the “play ... of creative vision.” In addition, Phillips believes that public art is not just about producing something for individuals to admire, but is also about creating “an opportunity – a situation – that enables viewers to look back at the world with renewed perspectives and clear angles of vision.”<sup>31</sup> In *The Practice of Public Art*, Cameron Cartiere clarifies what public art is, providing a “working definition” of public art as “art outside of museums and galleries” that fits into at least one of the following categories:

1. in a place accessible or visible to the public: *in public*
2. concerned with or affecting the community or individuals: *public interest*
3. maintained for or used by the community or individuals: *public place*
4. paid for by the public: *publicly funded*<sup>32</sup>

There are several different ideas about the origins of public art. As visual artist Suzanne Lacy writes, “Depending on how one begins the record, public art has a history as ancient as cave painting or as recent as the Art in Public Places Program of the National Endowment of the Arts.”<sup>33</sup> Others point to the period of the federally funded Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP), which ran from the early 1930s to the early 1940s, as a

26 Cher Krause Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 4.

27 Arlene Raven, “Introduction,” in *Art in the Public Interest*, ed. Arlene Raven, Studies in the Fine Arts: Criticism 32 (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 15.

28 Cartiere, “Coming in from the Cold,” 9.

29 Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster, eds., “Introduction,” in *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), xi.

30 Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1995), 19; Senie and Webster, “Introduction,” xi.

31 Patricia Phillips, “Public Constructions,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 70.

32 Cartiere, “Coming in from the Cold,” 15 (*italics in original*).

33 Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, 21.

beginning point of public art.<sup>34</sup> However, Lacy states that “for all intents and purposes, the contemporary activity in public art dates from the establishment of the Art in Public Places Program at the National Endowment of the Arts in 1967 and the subsequent formation of state and city percent-for-art programs.”<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned, RACC administers Portland’s Percent-for-Art programs and acts as Portland’s agent in the city’s art investments. As such, RACC is responsible for the artworks coming into the city’s art collection, which involves maintaining the recordkeeping for the artworks and deciding where these city-owned pieces will eventually reside. Kristin Calhoun, the public art manager at RACC, explains that when working on a new Percent-for-Art project, RACC sits down with the agency receiving the funds to talk about what the role of public art is in that particular agency’s context. Calhoun recalls that when RACC met with Banning to have this discussion, it was Banning who said, “What if we had an artist-in-residence program?” and as Calhoun says, “We jumped on it.”<sup>36</sup> In an interview with Calhoun a few months after PARC’s artist-in-residence program began, she described how PARC’s residency is coinciding with

this kind of swelling movement in contemporary practice of art as social practice and how you connect objects, people, and community. [The RACC is] always looking for those kinds of opportunities, because objects aren’t always what’s the most meaningful, in terms of public art interaction. Sometimes you’re better served by doing temporary installation works or performance works.

Calhoun continues:

Where Imatani and Sand sit and connect is exactly the kind of synergies we are looking for in doing these kinds of residency projects. RACC is really looking at how this public experience [can] connect, build, and inform, and be informed, by the artists’ broader interests and body of work ... part of what we think the public art collection should be is a very different kind of archive if you will, of the sort of artistic presence in the community.<sup>37</sup>

Much of what both Phillips and Calhoun believe public art is about (such as social practice; interactivity; the forging of connections between community, people, and objects; the constructing of opportunities for individuals to gain new perspectives; and the creation of dynamic responses to current issues) is found in the artists’ work in this residency. The ways in which Imatani and Sand are conceptualizing and creating art/poetry objects and performances inspired by and with archival records within this particular archival and public

34 Knight, *Public Art*, 8; Senie and Webster, “Introduction,” xiv.

35 Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, 21.

36 Kristin Calhoun, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

37 Ibid.

art milieu is the focus of the second half of this article. Close attention is given to the work of Sand because her poetry objects and performances were some of the first works to emerge from the residency and, as such, influenced the direction and attentions of this article.

### **The Artists' Work(s): Working with, Feeling, and Talking Back to Archival Records**

In May 2013, after several months of researching in the archive, Sand described her process of working with the Watcher Files records:

I started off trying to look at one collection, to get a sense of the kinds of things in there. So I started with the American Indian Movement. I take on threads ... I'm thinking about some of the people I want to interview, so I'm going and pursuing those threads ... the way I'm deciding that is through our conversations [with Imatani] and the presence of interesting surveillance documents. One of the threads I've been really looking at is the anti-nuclear movements, because they're interesting surveillance documents and there's a man I want to interview, but I'm getting the background really strong before I approach him.<sup>38</sup>

Another reason why the anti-nuclear movement files are attractive to Sand is that the anti-nuclear groups "had a number of seeming successes with their activism," such as a nuclear plant shutdown. For Sand, the records contain "a kind of an interesting history that's recent that I am really curious to learn more about and to contextualize in terms of the present."<sup>39</sup> Sand also feels that, besides containing historical content, the records contain "a lot of fear." Speaking to this at a poetry reading at the University of Alabama, Sand talked about her interest in "flipping around the paranoia," stating,

There's clearly a lot of fear in the files – the thinking [of the police] that dissent needs to be suppressed. I became interested in what this dissent sometimes created and whether it's making something happen or also preventing things from happening. So I interviewed and have done "talk-back" with some of the activists that were surveilled, and one of them is a man named Lloyd Marbet.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the residency the artists have been interviewing activists whose lives have been caught in the records, the interviews leading to art and literary collaborations between the artists and activists, resulting in poetry, performances, sculptures, and exhibitions that address and fill in some of the silences in the records and enhance the historical view of political activism in Portland.

38 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

39 Ibid.

40 Kaia Sand, "Poetry Performance" at University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1 April 2014.

One of the collaborations is with Lloyd Marbet, an anti-nuclear power activist (mentioned above by Sand) who is well documented in the police files. The first surveillance photograph found by the artists of Marbet was from 1969. It shows him selling the *Willamette Bridge* newspaper on SW Broadway at SW Yamhill in Portland. In the summer and early fall of 2013, the artists went to meet and interview Marbet on the Oregon property where he is a caretaker, and this resulted in several collaborations between them. One of these is a “talk-back” document in response to one of the surveillance documents found about Marbet.

May 6, 1972

Atomic Energy Commission Hearings

Re: Construction License for DOE's Trojan Nuclear Plant

Time and Location: May 1 and 2, 1972  
Portland Conzopolitan Air-Tel  
6221 N. W. 62nd Avenue

Suspicious Vehicle: 1950 International Pick-up  
Color: Oxidised Dark Green  
Oregon License 188 330  
Registered to: Lloyd K. Marbet  
5312 N. W. 64th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon

Operator of vehicle: 22-26 year old white male  
Height: 5'10", weight: 170 lbs., Dk. Brown hair  
shoulder length, full dark brown curly beard,  
blue eyes, round silver colored metal framed  
glasses, wearing blue and white striped bib  
overalls, a blue levi jacket, and army jungle  
boots, cast on left forearm.

During the two days of hearings, the above listed vehicle operator was present. He appeared to be the organizer of the protesters that were present, (14 persons the first day and 5 the second day). The vehicle contained five, 5 gallon gas cans, a short length of hose, two product crates containing empty wine bottles, and an onion sack full of rags in the bed. There was a German Shepherd dog in the cab.

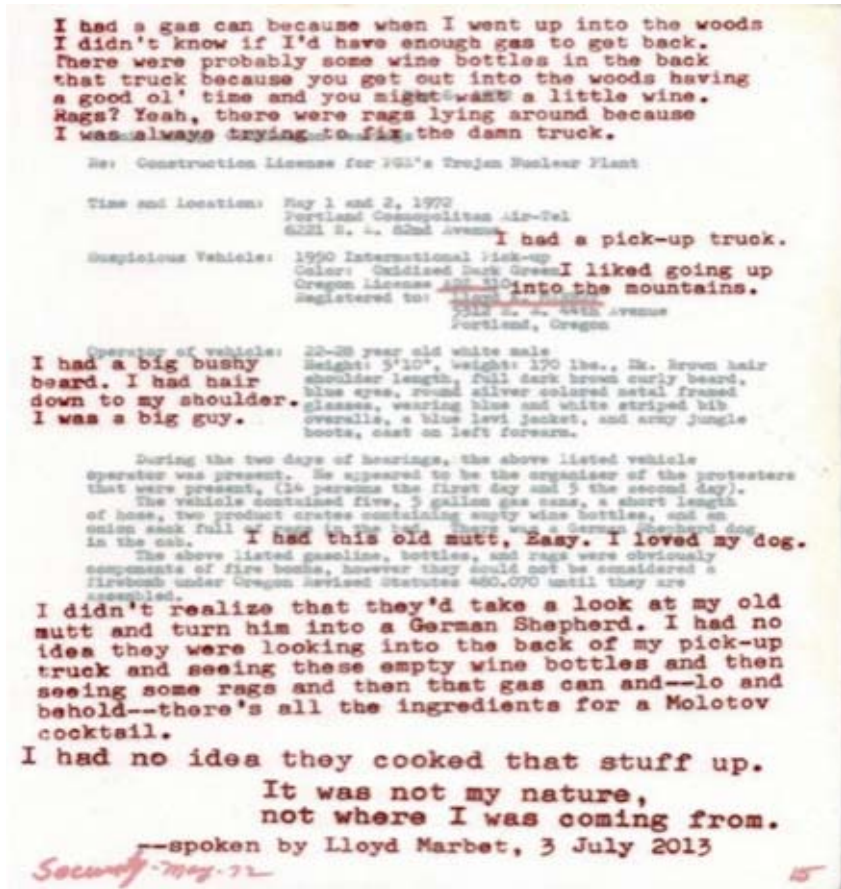
The above listed gasoline, bottles, and rags were obviously components of fire bombs, however they could not be considered a firebomb under Oregon Revised Statutes 480.070 until they are assembled.

Security - May 72

15

**Figure 2:** The police surveillance document about Marbet.<sup>41</sup>

41 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, “Marbet Talks Back to Assertions from This Surveillance of Trojan Hearings,” *The Watcher Files Project*, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://looseleafservices.us/marbet-talks-back-to-assertions-from-this-surveillance-of-trojan-hearings/>.



**Figure 3:** The police surveillance document with a silk-screen overlay containing Marbet's "talk-back" response (in red) to the document's assertions.<sup>42</sup>

The artists and Marbet also worked together on the artists' first exhibition of the residency, which was held at PARC in October 2013. As Imatani explains, the exhibition featured a number of handmade items from Marbet's activism work, such as the suit his friend hand-stitched for him, so he could be well dressed for hearings, and a ceramic coin canister in the shape of

<sup>42</sup> Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, "Viewing Archives through an Artist's Lens: The City of Portland's Artist-in-Residence Program" (lecture, Northwest Archivists Conference, Spokane, WA, 30 May 2014).

a nuclear cooling tower, which was used for fundraising. The artists also listed stories regarding those for whom surveillance files existed. About the exhibition, Imatani states that it was “important to bring all of these things together, mainly because it complicates that distinction between the official and the personal.”<sup>43</sup> Complicating the distinction between the “official and the personal” is a thread running through the artists’ work in this residency; they employed this strategy not only in the exhibition at PARC, but also in the talk-back document created with Marbet, and they have since used it in their activist bookshelf project. This strategy evinces how archival records and personal memory/objects can work in tandem to enhance each other and how together they generate and transmit new knowledge about a phenomenon. These works of individual memory, personal objects, and archival records enrich both the Watcher Files collection at PARC and the greater societal record; they become “nodes in a network”<sup>44</sup> of memory practices, creating and contributing to a multivalent view of both past and present-day activism and civic engagement in Portland.

### Poetic Chains of Activity

While primarily a poet, Sand works across genres and media, moving poetry from the format of the book into other contexts. In an interview with Judith Pulman in *Oregon Artswatch*, an online arts and culture publication, Sand describes her writing process:

I’ve always been motivated by the social and the political. For me, writing poetry seems necessarily social because of the material I use: language. All language is what everyone else is using and what everyone else has made. I just love that – every single word has been made by social usage and I feel like I’m in the middle of it, trying to gather it or trying to give it some sort of luster or significance. I’m a person who’s really attracted to language. It feels like poetry is all around me and I get to usher it into space.<sup>45</sup>

Sand sees her process of writing poetry as “moving into what I don’t understand, what I don’t know, what I want to think through and figure out,” which she has come to describe as “inexpert investigation,” that is, “opening up a query rather than claiming authority.”<sup>46</sup> In the residency, Sand is working

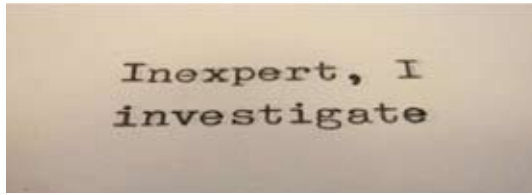
43 Ibid.

44 Eric Ketelaar, “Being Digital in People’s Archives,” *Archives & Manuscripts* 31, no. 2 (November 2003): 16.

45 Judith Pulman, “Poetry and Art from the Archives of Big Brother,” *Oregon Artswatch*, 27 January 2014, Culture, <http://www.orartswatch.org/poetry-and-art-from-the-archives-of-big-brother/>.

46 Sand, “Viewing Archives through an Artist’s Lens.”

**Figure 4:** Image from Sand's performance lecture at the Northwest Archivists Conference in Spokane, WA, 30 May 2014. Image courtesy of Kaia Sand.



out of a lineage of investigative poetry influenced by poet William Carlos Williams' work with documents generated by the city of Paterson, New Jersey, Muriel Rukeyser's use of federal documents in her poetry, and the book *Investigative Poetry* by beat poet Ed Sanders. "Investigative poetry," writes Sanders, is the concept "that poetry should again assume responsibility for the description of history."<sup>47</sup> Sanders' explication accords tightly with Sand's poetry-making in the residency, especially in relation to her work with Marbet, to which this article now turns.

In collaboration with Marbet, Sand created *So He Raised His Hand*, a set of interconnected poems that tell stories about Marbet's transformation into a citizen intervener and public citizen. At the Northwest Archivists Conference, Sand described the process of creating the poems: "So when we [Sand and Imatani] went out and interviewed [Marbet] on the land that he is caretaking, he told us stories, and those stories became the language and the art for a series of poems."<sup>48</sup> Sand subsequently arranged seven of Marbet's stories onto the page, and added verses based on Marbet's rhythms and images. Afterwards, Sand collaborated with book designer and printer Inge Bruggeman on the form of the poem. Next, Marbet edited the text, Sand wrote the opening and closing poems, in which Marbet was cast as "the Caretaker," and the poems came into shape in Bruggeman's print shop.<sup>49</sup> Sand performed *So He Raised His Hand* in April 2014 at the University of Alabama. Two poets performed with her, assuming the "voices" in the poems, with Sand assuming Marbet's "voice." Before performing, Sand recalled working with Marbet:

I worked with his stories and rhythms; we sent this back and forth. So it is very much his rhythms but my shaping. I think I hear so much of him and he hears so much of me in this. The opening and closing bits are really poems that narrate my process of walking with him and being with him and listening to the stories.<sup>50</sup>

47 Ed Sanders, *Investigative Poetry* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1976), 3.

48 Sand, "Viewing Archives through an Artist's Lens."

49 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, "So He Raised His Hand," *The Watcher Files Project*, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://looseleafservices.us/so-he-raised-his-hand/>.

50 Sand, "Poetry Performance."



What has been interesting to Sand with *So He Raised his Hand* is what she calls the “chain of activity,” which started with the archival documents, the interviews with Marbet, and then going “far afield and reading these poems with people who have no relationship with the original documents.” She describes how she has often ended up reading the poem with younger poets, in places such as Tuscaloosa (detailed above), Houston, Seattle, and Pullman, Washington, and that each time “it’s been really interesting to see how these stories move into a kind of autonomous, slightly autonomous, existence.”<sup>51</sup>

### Collaging Archival Records

Besides her interest in and work with records pertaining to anti-nuclear activism, another thread Sand followed during the residency was to gather records with “this interesting language that begins with ‘she.’”<sup>52</sup> In the files, Sand was struck by the considerable amount of police surveillance on movements regarding women, and the large number of records the investigators kept on women’s groups – especially groups dealing with domestic violence or groups focused on women’s labour: “The police tended to be surveilling women in terms of any kind of transgression – feminism, labor, domestic violence. To discover that these were the qualities investigators found dangerous was interesting.”<sup>53</sup> By pursuing her interest in “collaging language to coax lyricism out of the files, the surveillance documents, newspaper clippings, and newsletters” to see how “meaning will accrete,”<sup>54</sup> Sand culled and connected lines from the files to create the poem “She Had Her Own Reason for Participating.”<sup>55</sup> Sand imagines the poem as a “kind of wire service report on conditions of women who were challenging the status quo in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s”<sup>56</sup> and a way for her “to sort of index the fear these police spies had about women – particularly women organizing for rights around domestic violence, around labor, for peace issues, for all kinds of things.”<sup>57</sup> Sand’s poem exists as a poetry object consisting of nearly thirty copper plates, each of which is stamped with one line of the poem (see figure 1).

The inspiration for the physical form came from boxes of index cards the police investigators meticulously kept, “cards and cards and cards of peoples’ names,”<sup>58</sup> which Sand learned about through conversations with PARC’s

51 Sand, “Viewing Archives through an Artist’s Lens.”

52 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

53 Kaia Sand, interview by Dave Miller.

54 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

55 The title of the poem comes from a line Sand found in a newspaper article in the files, describing a ten-year-old girl who took part in a 1970s Women’s Nightwatch march.

56 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 23 May 2013.

57 Sand, “Poetry Performance.”

58 Kaia Sand, interview by Dave Miller.

assistant archivists, Brian Johnson and Mary Hansen. At the Northwest Archivists Conference, Sand explained that when Johnson pulled out the boxes of index cards, “it was an ‘aha’ moment.... I realized I could create something poetically that could move like these index cards.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, using the physical shape of the police index cards as a form, Sand imprinted the “she” language she had collected from newspaper articles, activist materials, and surveillance documents onto the copper plates with steel type, a sledgehammer, and alcohol-based ink.

Sand’s poetry object is housed in a drawer in a plinth built by Imatani,<sup>60</sup> who explains that he created the plinth as a means to display *Looseleaf Services* (a limited-edition subscription-based artist book created by the artists for the Watcher Files Project) and to simultaneously “invoke the presence of sculpture: something that you walk around, something that changes depending on your sightline and orientation.” Imatani says that the *Looseleaf Services* book

is exactly like this too. When you look at the text on the cover of the book, it orients you to expect its contents to face a certain direction. But, once you open it, it requires you to shift the book or yourself again in order to “properly read it.” This re-orienting of the body is important ... I want to always call attention to the body for myself and for someone reading or engaging with our objects. Architecture, furniture, the built environment. These are all things that can be read. They contain narrative; they contain stories. The drawer of Kaia’s copper cards only serves to re-iterate the bodily shift and re-orientation I mentioned earlier, as well as this association to a sculpture or piece of furniture/architecture being read like a book. The drawer I built to hold the copper cards (which has a cast bronze twig as a handle) was cut into a side of the plinth that is different from the side that one might face to properly read the top outer cover of the *Looseleaf Services* book.<sup>61</sup>

Not only does Imatani invite viewers to shift and reorient their bodies in order to read his sculpture of varying components and sightlines, but he and Sand, through her re-contextualization of sentences from archival records into a poetry object (records are “always in a process of becoming”<sup>62</sup>), invite viewers to reorient and shift their perspectives on how a body of archival records might be read. The poetry object could be read as a chronicle of some of

59 Ibid.

60 The poetry object/plinth was on exhibit at the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, 10 January–15 May 2014, and at the Art, Design, & Architecture Museum at the University of California Santa Barbara, 17 May–10 August 2014. In addition, a YouTube video of a hand moving through the drawer of the copper plates in the plinth can be found on the artists’ website and Facebook page.

61 Garrick Imatani, email message to author, 3 September 2014.

62 Sue McKemmish, “Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice,” *Archival Science* 1, no. 4 (December 2001): 335, doi:10.1007/BF02438901.

the activities, concerns, or experiences of activist women in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, or as a look into the surveillance interests of the police, or, as Sand conceptualizes it, a commemoration for “women struggling for rights, often anonymously.”<sup>63</sup> Undoubtedly, there are many ways to read this poetry object. In this interactive sculpture, the artists create a space for the records to become a “conversation and an arena for participation,”<sup>64</sup> where individuals can experience and interact with the archive, public art, and Portland history.

### Recasting and Embodying Archival Records

Of interest to Sand is the idea of “recasting” her poetry. She describes this process as “not abandoning a poem quickly,” but rather staying with and recreating the poem in different forms, such as books, objects, and performances. She does this to “give the work a kind of duration,” and to create new ways of shaping as well as creating contexts for a poem.<sup>65</sup> Sand recast “She Had Her Own Reason for Participating” for performance, using a format she tends to use often – a scroll.<sup>66</sup> As she explains, “I love scrolls. I love them. I think it’s the movement; there’s a



**Figure 5:** *Looseleaf Services* book (Imatani and Sand), “She Had Her Own Reason for Participating” (Sand), and Plinth (Imatani), all 2014. Photo courtesy of Gerrick Imatani and Kaia Sand.

- 63 Garrick Imatani and Kaia Sand, “Passing It On: An Exhibit of New Work from the Watcher Files Project,” 27 October 2014.
- 64 Isto Huvila, “Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralised Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualisation of Records Management,” *Archival Science* 8, no. 1 (March 2008): 27, doi:10.1007/s10502-008-9071-0.
- 65 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 30 May 2014.
- 66 For a video of Sand performing “She Had Her Own Reason for Participating,” with the scroll, at the Hazel Room in Portland as part of the Switch Reading Series on 9 August 2013, see YouTube video “Kaia Sand Reads from the Watcher Files Project,” posted 13 September 2013 by PDXPoets99percent, <http://youtu.be/JaEdfC70Y94>.

beautiful movement of a scroll.... There's also a way in which it creates a kind of coherence – and that I think ultimately started to really make sense to me working with the police files. When everything's in pieces there's a way in which the scroll gathers."<sup>67</sup> Sand's scroll is made of light brown paper panels stitched together with red thread. The poem is typewritten on the panels, with some of the lines redacted with blue house paint: "I thought redacting visually is significant because of the [surveillance] files we work with ... a black redaction replicates the act of the redactors – that's the color documents are redacted with – especially when they're photocopied. So that's why I didn't want to use black."<sup>68</sup> For Sand, using the colour blue to redact her poem (which she did intuitively) was also about taking "what they [the police] did and then flip it, turn it, contort it ... there's something very sweet about blue."<sup>69</sup>

### Recasting Again, Moving Records

During the residency, both Imatani and Sand became interested in and propelled by maps they found in the files, which had been created by activist groups to obtain permits to hold marches in the city. Sand is working with one map in particular, that of the 1978 Women's Nightwatch march in downtown Portland.<sup>70</sup> At the Northwest Archivists Conference, Sand reflected on her experience of working with the map (and the surveillance files in general), stating that, "one march, one pamphlet, or one map



**Figure 6:** Scroll containing Sand's poem "She Had Her Own Reason for Participating." Photo by Melissa Long, Project Cityscope.

67 Kaia Sand, in discussion with the author, 30 May 2014.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Women's Nightwatch held three flashlight marches in 1977, 1978, and 1979 to address reported rapes (along with those that had not been reported to the police) in Tyron State Park, Portland, and to bring attention to this unsafe area of the city as well as violence against women.

can seem so unimportant ... but then, how do I with hindsight, simply notice the particulars so that they add up? How do I, in a sense, commemorate the small acts, like the [1978] march?”<sup>71</sup>

One of the ways Sand has been commemorating the march is by walking and re-walking the route, and, in addition, recasting the “she” language from her poem as a march. At the conference, imagining the map of the march in the space of the room, Sand performed the poem-march:

[Sand walks slowly down the perimeter and up the centre of the room, the scroll unfurling from her hands as she reads.]

*She advised that after attending two of these meetings she discovered it wasn't for her.*

*She advised that the meeting begin at 5pm.*

*She was also advised to the best of her knowledge that she has no close friends, or*

*associates, which are either members of, or sympathizers of, any religious or political groups.*

*She also went to night school.*

*She always gets kidded about being a female mechanic at auto parts shops...*



**Figure 7:** Sand performing “She Had Her Own Reason for Participating,” with maps and scroll, at Project Cityscope, Portland, 21 April 2014. Photo by Melissa Long, Project Cityscope.

71 Sand, “Viewing Archives through an Artist’s Lens.”

After the performance, Sand spoke about a further iteration of her poem, created by visual artist Daniela Molnar. In April 2014, Molnar asked Sand to take part in her project, *Words in Place*.<sup>72</sup> For this project, Molnar interviewed five poets in public places of their choosing. She then asked each poet to give her a poem s/he had written in response to the chosen place. Then, Molnar created visual statements inspired from the poem to be set in the poet's chosen public place.<sup>73</sup>

Molnar did a "walking interview" with Sand along the route of the Nightwatch march that Sand had been re-walking. Molnar recalls:

We strode the route of the original march, inspired by Kaia's current residency at the City of Portland Archives and Records Center. Some ideas rose vividly and repeatedly to the surface: the history of protest and feminism in Portland; the privatization of public space; technology's impact on public space, public memory, and creative practice; and the ingenuity of poets and artists to repurpose, redefine, and reclaim.<sup>74</sup>

Sand then gave Molnar a photograph of the scroll of "She Had Her Own Reason for Participating," and told Molnar she could do whatever she liked with the poem. Molnar created six signs; each is painted with one line from the poem. Molnar then invited friends, over two nights, to be photographed holding the signs at various places along the route of the march. Describing this process, she writes that she was interested to "bring these covert phrases into the public, utilizing the visual language of a protest sign since our route followed a historic protest march route."<sup>75</sup> During the two evenings, Molnar and her friends attracted attention with their work: nearly fifty strangers asked Molnar about her project, and more than fifteen of them asked to be photographed with the signs.<sup>76</sup>

72 *Words in Place* was on exhibit at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle from 21 June to 21 September 2014. See Daniela Molnar, "About This Project," *Words in Place*, <http://www.wordsinplace.org/>. As Molnar explains, *Words in Place* "aims to interrupt passive cultural attitudes towards public space by activating specific spaces with poems referencing those spaces. The project affirms that words not only reflect, but actually *create* the world around us, and that poetry (and art in general) can and should have social agency" [italics in original].

73 Ibid.

74 Daniela Molnar, "Interview with Kaia Sand," *Words in Place*, 2014, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://www.wordsinplace.org/kaia-sand-interview/>.

75 Daniela Molnar, "Images," *Words in Place*, 2014, <http://www.wordsinplace.org/kaia-sand/images-kaia-sand/>.

76 Daniela Molnar, in discussion with the author, 6 June 2014.



**Figure 8:** Liliya Drubetskaya holding sign. Photo courtesy of Daniela Molnar / Words In Place.



**Figure 9:** Julia Nunn holding sign. Photo courtesy of Daniela Molnar / Words In Place.

## Conclusion

At the centre of Imatani and Sand's work in this residency is the archival record. All of the art and literary works and collaborations emerging from the Watcher Files Project originate from the myriad ways the artists are resonating with and responding to the historical and sociocultural contexts, contents, and/or physical structures of the records. "The record," writes Eric Ketelaar, "is a repository of meanings,"<sup>77</sup> which the artists have not only drawn from but are also, through each reuse and recontextualization, adding to. In doing so, the artists are "pluralizing" the archive, contributing to the fourth dimension of the records continuum, to collective memory.<sup>78</sup> During this residency, the records have taken on a variety of meanings and effects: they have become sources of artistic and literary inquiry, inspiration, collaboration, and production, and form the basis of a public art project. The artists use the records as tools for social action to bring voice to lives embedded, yet silenced, in the records, and through the records (and often with activists whose lives are caught up in the records) are producing an alternate history of Portland activism and civic engagement.

Imatani and Sand have recast and repurposed a substantial number of the records as new physical, digital, and embodied forms experienced by individuals at poetry readings, art exhibitions, lectures, conferences, on the streets of Portland, and in various places on the Web. The repurposing and reconfiguring of the records serves to, as Sand states, "flip the paranoia," effacing the controlling intentions of the police and providing another view of Portland history. And for the strangers who wanted to be photographed in Molnar's work, holding lines from Sand's poem "She Had Her Own Reason for Participating," the police records of control become a source of empowerment and a means of making a personal statement. Following the journey of the records from the archive to Molnar's photographs presents an opportunity to reflect on how records can move through time and space, accruing and developing new textures and meanings.

This study is part of a larger research project that will examine the Police Historical/Archival Investigative Files (the Watcher Files) using a refinement of Marcus's mobile ethnography – "Follow the life or biography" – which Marcus defines as a "special case" of following the plot.<sup>79</sup> Following and analyzing the life history of the records will be a useful way to bring into view the movement, treatment, and use of the records through time and space. It

77 Eric Ketelaar, "Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities," *Archival Science* 12, no. 1 (March 2012): 23, doi:10.1007/s10502-011-9142-5.

78 McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," 335.

79 Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System," 109.



provides a framework from which to ask such questions as: What is the origin of the files? Who authored the files and for what purposes? How were the files organized and then used within or outside of the police department? How were the files moved to, managed, and used by the Portland Tribune? How were the files transferred into archival custody at PARC? What kinds of decisions did the archivists make with records? How have the records been managed and used over time, up until and through the artist-in-residence program?

Following the life history of the records provides a way to “interrogate” what Eric Ketelaar terms the “semantic genealogy” of the archive, that is, the many contexts and meanings that have become connected to the records and the archive through their use and reuse over time.<sup>80</sup> It also aligns with current archival approaches to provenance, reconceptualized by Tom Nesmith to include “the social and technical processes of the records’ inscription, transmission, contextualization, and interpretation which account for its existence, characteristics, and continuing history.”<sup>81</sup> In this expanded view of provenance, in this particular milieu, investigating the social, historical, and technical processes, meanings, and contexts of the records’ creation and uses will provide places from which to consider the kinds of human transactions, experiences, and relationships that occur between – and that animate – archival records, art, poetry, and archives.

As my study with PARC’s artist-in-residence program continues and unfolds, it is revealing what archival records can inspire individuals to do; what kinds of things can be done with records; how records can move through time and space, acquiring new meanings and uses; and what kinds of relationships can be formed around the use of records. The artists’ works – especially their collaborations with Marbet – underline how records can be “active and ever-evolving agents themselves in the formation of human and organizational memory.”<sup>82</sup> Besides being vital tools in the production and transmission of memory, records can also be active, energetic forces that evoke emotional and creative responses, channel human connection and action, and provide intellectual, aesthetic, and sensory experiences in a variety of contexts. This study brings forward how an archive can foster relationships between records, people, places, and events in unpredictable, generative, and community-building ways. The artist-in-residence program at PARC reminds us how the archive is always being “reborn, reimaged, [and] reinvented”<sup>83</sup> and encourages

80 Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives,” *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (June 2001): 141, doi:10.1007/BF02435644.

81 Tom Nesmith, “Still Fuzzy, but More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the ‘Ghosts’ of Archival Theory,” *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999): 146.

82 Terry Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives,” *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001): 29.

83 *Ibid.*, 35.

thinking about the archive as a social actor “enmeshed in, and active in, social relations,”<sup>84</sup> which enables, mobilizes, stimulates, and influences social action and, as such, plays an important and vital role in public life and art.

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84 Elizabeth Edwards, “Material Beings: Objecthood and Ethnographic Photographs,” *Visual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2002): 68, doi:10.1080/14725860220137336.